

THE CLAIMED INVENTION IS:

1. A method for pre-planning printed products between a print vendor's server and a client's computer networked to the print vendor's server, the client's computer being adapted to display a pre-plan user-interface and a print-order user-interface which reside on the print vendor's server, the method comprising:

generating a first plan with the pre-plan user-interface on the client's computer;

exporting the resulting first plan from the client's computer to individuals within the client's organization;

receiving first input on the client's computer from the individuals having received and reviewed the resulting exported first plan;

optionally revising on the client's computer the first plan based upon the received first input;

creating a first print-order on the client's computer, by:

a) importing the resulting plan into the print-order user-interface; and

b) selecting graphic elements for the print order;

and

submitting the resulting first print-order to the print vendor for production via the print vendor's server.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the first plan is a data object.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the first plan is a marketing plan for a subscription offer.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein the subscription offer is to a magazine, a newsletters, a newspaper, a special interest group, or combinations thereof.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the client's organization is a publisher or a third party vendor to a publisher.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the computer network comprises the internet, a local area network, or a wide-area network.
7. The method of claim 1 wherein the print vendor's server includes a workstation, mini-computer, or main-frame host computer.
8. The method of claim 1 wherein the pre-plan user-interface includes subscription plan fields.
9. The method of claim 1 wherein exporting comprises down-loading the resulting first plan from the pre-plan user-interface into a spreadsheet.
10. The method of claim 1 wherein exporting comprises printing the resulting first plan from the pre-plan user-interface.
11. The method of claim 1 wherein importing the resulting plan is the resulting first plan or else the resulting optionally revised second plan.
12. The method of claim 1 wherein selecting graphic elements for the print order is accomplished by choosing menu items provided by the print-order user-interface, by a client-user providing customized graphic elements, or combinations thereof.
13. The method of claim 1 wherein individuals within the client's organization comprise a marketing director, a subscription plan manager, production department personnel, procurement department personnel, finance department personnel, accounting department personnel, strategic planning personnel, fulfillment department personnel, and combinations thereof.

14. The method of claim 1 wherein the first input includes plan authorization, plan revision, plan comment, and combinations thereof.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein plan revision comprises additions, deletions, corrections, contingencies, and combinations thereof.

16. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

- printing the submitted first print-order;
- optionally combining the resulting printed pieces of the first print-order with a second printed piece;
- distributing the resulting printed pieces or the resulting combined pieces to consumers;
- receiving responses to the offers in the resulting printed pieces from consumers; and
- modifying the plan based on the responses.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein consumers comprises current subscribers, prospective subscribers, single point-of-purchase buyers, gratuitous readers, fulfillment houses, or combinations thereof.

18. A pre-plan system for managing printed information of printed products between a print vendor's server and a client's computer networked to the print vendor's server, the client's computer being adapted to display a user-interface which interface resides on the print vendor's server, the system comprising:

- 1) a print-order component operative to:
 - a) create;
 - b) optionally revise; and
 - c) submit,

a print-order by the client to the print vendor for printing, the print-order component having a layout information user-interface and plan-offer information user-interface; and

2) an export-import component operative to:

a) export a first plan-offer from the plan-offer information user-interface to individuals within the client's organization;

b) receive input from the individuals having received and responded to the exported first plan-offer;

c) optionally revise the first plan-offer in view of the received input; and

d) import the resulting plan-offer into the print-order component to complete the print order prior to submitting for printing.

19. The pre-plan system of claim 18 wherein the resulting plan is the un-revised first plan.

20. The pre-plan system of claim 18 wherein the resulting plan is a revised second plan.

21. The pre-plan system of claim 18 wherein the export-import component comprises a spreadsheet adapted to receive down-loaded plan information from the plan-offer information user-interface and to provide up-loaded plan information to the plan-offer information user-interface.

22. The pre-plan system of claim 18 wherein the export-import component comprises the client's computer displaying the plan-offer information in a spreadsheet format separated from of the plan-offer information user-interface.

23. A pre-planning system for managing and marketing printed products, between a print vendor's server and a client's computer networked to the print vendor's server, the

client's computer being adapted to display a user-interface over the print vendor's server, the system comprising:

means for creating and submitting a first print-order by the client, the print-order including a layout component and an plan component;

means for exporting the plan component of the first print-order to individuals within the client's organization;

means for receiving input from individuals having received the exported plan component;

means for optionally revising the plan component based on the received input; and

means for importing the un-revised first plan component or else the optionally revised second plan component into the first print-order to complete the order for production.

24. The pre-planning system of claim 23 wherein the means for creating and submitting the first print-order is a print-order user-interface.

25. The pre-planning system of claim 23 wherein the means for exporting the plan component of the first print-order to individuals within the client's organization is an electronic spreadsheet displayed on the client's computer.

26. The pre-planning system of claim 23 wherein the means for receiving input from individuals having received the exported plan component is an electronic spreadsheet displayed on the client's computer.

27. The pre-planning system of claim 23 wherein the means for importing the un-revised first plan component into the first print-order ignores any changes to an electronic spreadsheet containing the first plan.

28. The pre-planning system of claim 23 wherein the means for importing the revised second plan component into the first print-order accepts any changes to an electronic spreadsheet containing the revised second plan.

29. A method for pre-planning printed products on a remote computing platform networked to a server computing environment, the remote computing platform being adapted to display a pre-plan user-interface and a print-order user-interface available from the server computing environment, the method comprising:

- generating a first plan on the pre-plan user-interface;

- exporting the resulting first plan within the remote computing platform's organization;

- receiving first input on the resulting exported first plan from within the organization on the remote computing platform;

- optionally revising the first plan to provide a revised second plan based upon the received first input on the remote computing platform;

- creating a first print-order on the print-order user interface by:

- a) importing the resulting first plan or the optionally revised second plan;

and

- b) selecting graphic elements for the print order;

- and

- submitting the resulting first print order to the server computing environment.

30. The method of claim 29 wherein the remote computing platform is further adapted to display the resulting pre-plan in a third user-interface.

31. The method of claim 30 wherein the third user-interface is an electronic spreadsheet.

32. The method of claim 30 wherein the third user-interface is an electronic database.

33. The method of claim 29 wherein the remote computing platform is a client's computer.

34. The method of claim 29 wherein the server computing environment is a print-vendor's host computer.

35. In a computer system having a graphical user interface including a display and a selection device, a method of managing plan-order information, the method comprising:

retrieving, on a first client computer, a set of menu items from the pre-plan component of a print-order user-interface on a print vendor's host computer, each of the menu items representing a subscription offer creation option;

displaying the set of menu items on the first client computer;

receiving a menu entry selection signal indicative of the selection device pointing at a selected menu item from the set of menu items;

in response to the signal, exporting the selected menu items to a second client instrument;

receiving signals indicative of changes to the exported selected menu items on the first client computer from the second client instrument;

optionally modifying the selected menu items with received changes;

importing the resulting selected menu items or optionally modified selected menu items into a print vendor's server to complete the plan-offer component of a print-order for printing; and

storing the imported menu items on the print vendor's server for subsequent printing.

36. The method of claim 35 further comprising accessing, on the first client computer, the imported menu items stored on the print vendor's server for print-order creation.

37. The method of claim 35 further comprising accessing, on the first client computer, the imported menu items stored on the print vendor's server for modification of the print-order or modification of the plan-offer.

38. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing a method comprising:

- populating a database with values which specify a represented first print-order, the print-order including a layout component and a plan-offer component displayed on a networked computer user-interface;

- exporting the plan-offer component of the populated database to a device within an organization;

- receiving input concerning the exported plan-offer component from the device within the organization;

- optionally revising the plan-offer component based on the received input to provide a revised second plan-offer component;

- importing the un-revised plan-offer component or the optionally revised second plan-offer component into the user-interface to complete the first print-order for print production; and

- optionally, following printing and distribution of the printed pieces defined by the first print-order to customers:

- electronically receiving customer responses to the offer contained in the printed plan-offer component; and

- revising the plan-offer component in view of the received customer responses.

39. The computer-readable medium of claim 38 wherein populating the database is accomplished automatically with values specified by a computer user.

40. A set of application program interfaces embodied on a computer-readable medium for execution on a computer in conjunction with an application program that specifies a client's print order to a print vendor, comprising:

- a first interface that receives a client's plan-offer information;
- a second interface that receives a client's layout print information; and
- a third interface that combines the plan-offer information and layout print information into a print-order and electronically transmits the print-order to a print vendor for printing the print-order.

41. The set of application program interfaces of claim 40 wherein the first interface receives input concerning the plan-offer information from individuals within the client's organization.

42. The set of application program interfaces of claim 40 further comprising a fourth interface that receives input based on offer responses from consumer recipients of the resulting printed print-order.

43. The set of application program interfaces of claim 40 wherein the fourth interface provides input to the first interface.